Northern Alberta
Development Council

2005 Professional Workforce Scan

Professional Employment Opportunities By Economic Sector

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105-07514/

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2005 Professional Workforce Scan

INTRODUCTION

Overview

The 2005 Professional Workforce Scan was conducted by the survey consultant on behalf of the Northern Alberta Development Council Bursary Selection Committee. The purpose of the Professional Workforce Scan is to obtain information about current trends and circumstances in occupational hiring in northern Alberta. The Northern Alberta Development Council Bursary Selection Committee will use the results for their bursary selection process. Northern high schools, employment centers and individual participants will receive copies if respondents requested them.

Objectives

- To gather information on which fields of study are increasing in demand or are currently in high demand.
- To gather information on which fields of study are experiencing declining demand or may be currently in low demand.
- To determine which fields of study employers find difficulty to recruit.
- To identify future trends which employers expect will affect hiring in their sector.

Approach

Criteria for Selection of Potential Respondents

The potential scan sample increased from 164 in 2003 to 204 in 2005. The scan aimed to select employers based on the following criteria:

- Knowledge of employment hiring trends and circumstances of a particular sector/industry (i.e. manager or human resources representative).
- The ability to provide a sector-wide view, and not just their particular organization's or company's employment perspective.
- Geographical balance of sectors across the north.
- Balance of the public and private sector.
- Balance of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal employers.

Scoring

All respondents were provided with an introductory letter that explained the Northern Alberta Development Council Bursary Program and objectives of the study. A questionnaire consisting of seven questions and a list of post-secondary fields of study specific to each sector was sent to each sector representative. The researcher requested respondents to score all of the fields of study for their sector. They were to indicate whether graduates from these fields of study would be in high, medium or low demand. Respondents then indicated whether the field of study was difficult to recruit.

SCAN RESULTS

Out of 204 questionnaires sent out, 129 were completed (a 63% response rate, up from 62% in 2003.) The target was a minimum of 110 survey responses with no less than eight per sector. The response rates varied significantly from sector to sector.

SECTOR	SURVEYS SENT	SURVEYS COMPLETED	COMPLETION RATE
Agriculture and Food Processing	11	6	54%
Business Administration and Law	14	8	57%
Communication	12	9	75%
Construction, Manufacturing and Trades	19	9	47%
Education	15	12	80%
Finance and Insurance	15	11	73%
Government and Administration	15	13	86%
Hospitality, Recreation and Tourism	16	9	56%
Logging Forestry and Wood Industries	17	10	59%
Medical and Health Care	10	7	70%
Mining, Oil and Gas	14	8	57%
Retail and Wholesale Trade	15	10	66%
Social Services	14	9	64%
Transportation and Utilities	17	9	53%
TOTAL	204	129	64%

Data collected

Respondents discussed the following:

- Whether employment opportunities were Growing, Stable or Declining.
- Changes in employment opportunities they expected in the next three to five years.
- Existing hiring and recruitment practices.
- How hiring and recruitment practices were expected to change.

Respondents rated:

- Whether the field of study is relevant to the sector.
- List of fields of study that are in high demand based on sector results.
- List of fields of study that are difficult to recruit.
- List of fields of study that are in medium or low demand.

GENERAL RESULTS

General Growth Indicators by Sector

Respondents indicated whether they felt employment opportunities in their sectors were Growing Stable or Declining. In general very few respondents felt their sector was declining and about the majority felt, the sector was growing or stable. This trend was up significantly from the 2003 Professional Workforce Scan. Increasing competition from the oil and gas industry for skilled empioyees and increased confidence in most sectors has significantly increased the demand for skilled labour.

Retirements will also play a significant role in employment opportunities across all sectors in the next few years. Many respondents felt this would not only increase the demand for professionals but would give younger graduates opportunities to advance quickly in their professions. Most respondents expressed concern that demand for professionals and skilled tradesmen would far outstrip the supply in many occupations. Transition planning for this reality is going to be a major challenge for most employers across all sectors.

Growth in the Oil and Gas sector has motivated growth in most sectors. Construction, Manufacturing and Trades as well as Transportation and Utilities are busy building infrastructure to accommodate growth in the Oil and Gas Sector. Medical and Health Care, Education, Social Services, and the Retail and Wholesale sector all benefit from huge population growth, though this growth also poses significant challenges to each sector. All sectors but the Agriculture and Food Processing Sector expressed some optimism about increased employment opportunities in the north. Competition and trade disputes, especially the BSE crisis has caused the sector to falter and only those involved in value added and non-traditional crops expressed any optimism about future opportunities in the sector.

SECTOR	GROWING	STABLE	DECLINING	DIDN'T RESPOND
Agriculture and Food Processing	2	1	2	1
Business Administration and Law	6	2	0	0
Communication	6	3	0	0
Construction, Manufacturing, and Trades	9	0	0	0
Education	7	4	1	0
Finance and Insurance	10	0	0	1
Government and Administration	6	7	0	0
Hospitality, Recreation and Tourism	5	3	0	1
Logging Forestry and Wood Industries	5	5	0	0
Medical and Health Care	7	0	0	0
Mining, Oil and Gas	7	0	0	1
Retail and Wholesale Trade	7	2	1	0
Social Services	6	3	0	0
Transportation and Utilities	7	2	0	0
TOTAL	**90**	**32**	**4**	**4**

AGRICULTURE AND FOOD PROCESSING SECTOR

General Trends in the Sector

Unlike all other sectors in the scan, the Agriculture and Food Processing Sector is experiencing a period of pessimism about employment opportunities. The BSE crisis and other trade disputes with the United States caused a downturn and employment opportunities in the sector look to be grim in most parts of the sector for the near future. Any opportunities for growth appear to come not from traditional fields but in the areas of new crops, technology, and innovation.

The 2004 Alberta Careers Update confirmed the perceptions of the scan respondents. Agriculture was one of two sectors that did not grow in 2004 and the only one that reported a noticeable decline. The Update reported that US subsidies to American farmers would affect Alberta farmers' ability to compete in the marketplace.

Every respondent in this sector commented on the significant impact of the BSE crisis. Respondents commented that this not only has affected the beef industry but has also caused drops in prices for feed crops and related agricultural services. One respondent commented that localized droughts have also hurt the sector. Another felt that the sector is declining did mention that if the border to the United States opens to Canadian cattle the possibility of the sector recovering and growing is good.

2 of 6 stated they felt the sector was growing
1 of 6 stated they felt the sector was stable
2 of 6 stated they felt the sector was declining
1 respondent left this question blank

Where there is some optimism in the sector, is in the area of value added food processing. Both respondents who felt the sector was growing, felt that the demand for professionals with training in non-traditional crop production, value added processing and marketing are needed in the sector in the next few years.

Fields of Study that are in high demand:

Degree	Agricultural Science
Degree	Agriculture – Marketing
Diploma	Animal Health Technology
Degree	Chemical Engineering
Diploma	Chemical Engineering Technology
Degree	Chemistry (General)
Degree	Food, Nutrition & Dietetics
Degree	Genetics
Diploma	Heavy Equipment Technician
Apprentice	Heavy Equipment Technician
Journeyman	Heavy Equipment Technician
Diploma	Power Engineering
Degree	Secondary Food Processing (Research)
Masters	Veterinary Medicine
PhD	Veterinary Medicine

Fields of study in high demand in more than one sector:

Degree	Chemical Engineering
Diploma	Chemical Engineering Technology
Diploma	Heavy Equipment Technician
Apprentice	Heavy Equipment Technician
Journeyman	Heavy Equipment Technician
Diploma	Power Engineering

Fields of study that one or more respondents find hard to recruit:

Apprentice	Agricultural Mechanic
Diploma	Agricultural Production (Beef,Hog,Dairy,Poultry,etc)
Certificate	Agricultural Technologies
Degree	Agriculture - Marketing
Degree	Agronomist
Diploma	Animal Health Technology
Diploma	Chemical Engineering Technology
Certificate	Farrier Studies
Apprentice	Heavy Equipment Technician

Certificate	Instrumentation Technology
Masters	Veterinary Medicine
PhD	Veterinary Medicine

Employment Opportunities

Reduced optimism caused by declines in the beef industry has caused pessimism in the sector as a whole for the near future. Crop subsidies have continued to cause conflict with the US and have complicated the problems in the sector.

There is an increased demand for professionals familiar with specialized technologies to increase production. Biotechnology and information technology have reduced overall employment in the sector but increased the demand for specific professionals.

Growth:

Two of six respondents expressed optimism when questioned about employment opportunities in the sector. The agriculture industry is seeing increased demand for organic and medicinal crops for example. Specialists agree that with the aging population and increased concern about nutrition and food safety, there may be a significant opportunity in organic farming. One sector respondent feels that a small but lucrative market can be exploited in medicinals specifically those grown in northern Alberta. One respondent also noted that environmental and food safety concerns will continue to grow in the sector and there will be increased demand for professionals specializing in these two areas.

Farmers, frustrated with low commodity prices and poor market opportunities, are also looking for more opportunities in the area of value added processing. The BSE crisis has increased this trend with farmers looking for opportunities to process their livestock and foods locally. The value-added movement has appeared to accelerate in recent years and these two respondents were confident this trend would continue in most areas of the agricultural sector.

Stable:

One respondent who replied to the scan felt that the sector was stable did not explain.

Declining:

It is not surprising that two large animal veterinarians both expressed the belief that the employment opportunities in the sector are declining. The impact of BSE on cattle markets and prices is staggering. The demand for other agricultural products and services related to the cattle industry has also experienced a significant decline. These respondents reported farmers are unwilling and unable to pay reasonable prices for products such as feed grains and veterinary products. While farmers still need the services of large animal veterinarians, farmers are unable to pay reasonable market value for the service. Graduates are unwilling to work in the field because there is not enough money in it to pay bills. One veterinarian felt that at this point it almost seems pointless to be training large animal veterinarians.

Changes in employment opportunities in the next three to five years:

Market disputes with the United States have forced Agriculture and Food Processing Sector participants to reexamine their focus on traditional crops. Respondents were divided on whether the economy was growing, stable, or declining, but all agreed that if there were opportunities for new graduates, it exists in the areas of innovation, mechanization, and value added processing. Environmental and food safety concerns will increase the demand for specialists some fields. In addition, the respondents felt we would see increased demand for those specializing in food processing.

Only one respondent specifically mentioned a need for people trained for traditional jobs such as truck drivers and labourers. This sector, like all other sectors in northern Alberta will continue to see a demand for skilled tradesmen.

Current recruitment and hiring practices.

Employers have tried to adapt their hiring practices to reflect the increasingly competitive market for professionals. One respondent mentioned using local newspapers. Two respondents mentioned going to colleges and universities to recruit professionals. Only one respondent mentioned using the Internet to advertise for employees.

Another reported that retention is becoming more challenging for employers. Once hired, specialists willing to work in the agricultural sector are difficult to retain largely because professionals move to other sectors where the money is better.

How hiring practices will change:

Increasing competition for employees will continue to force employers to adapt. Employers feel that they will likely be using less local advertising and more advertising on the Internet and participating in recruitment campaigns in colleges. However, they feel that until the sector can pay better wages, employers will find it more difficult to find and retain trained professionals in the coming years.

BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION AND LAW

General Trends in the Sector

Respondents were generally very positive about employment prospects in the Business Administration and Law Sector. In this sector, growth appears to relate to regional population growth in the areas where the business is located. Fort McMurray especially is experiencing significant shortages in professionals in the sector. One respondent estimates that with an expected 10,000 to 15,000 people to move into the area there will be a need for as many as 20% more professionals in the area. Respondents from the northwest part of the province were more conservative in their outlook for their sector.

Contracting out professional services is becoming more popular in many sectors but it is especially significant in this sector. The growth of the economy as a whole has increased the demand for these professionals and employers are using contractors as a way of reducing

their personnel costs. This may indicate a need for more graduates to have entrepreneurial skills, as their jobs may be dependent on their ability to run their own business.

6 out of 8 stated they felt the sector was growing
2 out of 8 stated they felt the sector was stable
0 out of 8 stated they felt the sector was declining

Fields of study that are in high demand:

Diploma	Certified General Accountant (Designation) CGA
Degree	Certified Management Accountant (Designation) CMA
Degree	Commerce (Accounting) CA
Degree	Law

Fields of study that are also in demand in other sectors:

Degree	Commerce (Accounting) CA

Fields of study that one or more respondents find hard to recruit:

Diploma	Accounting
Diploma	Certified General Accountant (Designation) CGA
Degree	Certified Management Accountant (Designation) CMA
Degree	Commerce (Accounting) CA
Diploma	Land (Real Estate) Assessment & Appraisal
Degree	Law
Diploma	Legal Assistant

Employment Opportunities

Growth in the northern economy as a whole has buoyed predictions for future employment opportunities in this sector. The oil industry is doing very well, and most of the companies scanned reported that the effects of this sector were motivating growth in the Business Administration and Law sector. This is especially true of the northeast part of the province. Growth in Fort McMurray area has been so dramatic that all sectors including Business Administration and Law have experienced skilled labour shortages as businesses compete for employees who are looking toward lucrative positions in the oil industry.

Growth:

Two factors seem to be motivating the overall optimism for the future in the sector. First, respondents feel the oil industry appears to be maintaining its strength and accelerating in Fort McMurray. This increases the demand for professional services. The second factor is the aging of the workforce in the sector. Two respondents expect their senior staff to retire and expect vacancies will open for new graduates. However, one respondent noted that it is unlikely that the number of graduates in the accounting field will meet the demand for employees in the long term.

Stable:

The two respondents who felt that the employment prospects in the sector would remain stable were from the northeast part of the province. They felt that opportunities in the sector were dependent on population growth and in this region of the province the population has remained stable or is declining slightly.

Changes in employment opportunities:

Most respondents felt that employment opportunities would continue to grow in the next few years. One respondent went so far as to say that opportunities would be expanding for the next ten years. The most significant factor in this growth appears to be the continued strength in the oil and gas sector. A significant number of retirements expected in the next few years will create opportunities for graduates.

More and more employers are relying on contracted services. This sector traditionally offers contracted services to customers so businesses in the sector will be in a good position to exploit the growing trend. Students might want to focus on business management and entrepreneurial skills.

Current hiring practices:

Most respondents reported they are using traditional recruitment and hiring practices. They mentioned using print media, especially professional magazines, and traditional print ads in local papers. This sector also reported using a lot of networking to fill positions. A number of respondents noted using word of mouth and professional contacts to fill positions.

How hiring practices will change:

In the 2003 Professional Workforce Scan employers mentioned having a significant number of candidates for vacancies. Now it appears employers are feeling that they must be more competitive to fill positions. Two mentioned needing to use more web-based advertising than in the past. Another responded that they would be recruiting more candidates from schools and through professional contacts than they have in the past.

It also appears employers are expecting to need to offer more training to employees than they have in the past. One respondent stated there would not be many vacancies in the sector that would not require some form of post-secondary training.

COMMUNICATION

General Trends in the Sector

There is increased optimism in the Communications Sector compared to 2003. Optimism continued to be strong in the information technology part of the sector, but this year the media

industry also reported expected employment opportunities to grow. This faith was due to strength of the economy and population growth in many areas.

6 out of 9 stated they felt the sector was growing
3 out of 9 stated they felt the sector was stable
0 out of 9 stated they felt the sector was declining

Relatively low wages compared to other sectors hamper employers' ability to fill positions with qualified candidates. Both radio and print media report significantly lower pay compared to other sectors of the economy. Respondents representing print media reported a difficulty finding qualified candidates. That is not the case, however, in the radio industry where one respondent reported the competition for positions in broadcasting seem to be stiff in spite of relatively poor wages compared to other sectors.

Fields of study that are in high demand:

Diploma	Broadcast Arts
Certificate	Digital & Interactive Media Design
Diploma	Digital & Interactive Media Design
Diploma	Journalism, News Reporting
Apprentice	Printing and Graphic Arts Craftsman

Fields of study that are also in demand other sectors:

Certificate	Digital & Interactive Media Design
Diploma	Digital & Interactive Media Design

Fields of study that one or more respondents find hard to recruit:

Degree	Computer Graphics Design
Certificate	Computer Operator
Degree	Computer Science
Masters	Computer Science
PhD	Computer Science
Certificate	Digital & Interactive Media Design
Degree	Electrical/Electronic Engineering
Certificate	Information Technology
Diploma	Information Technology & Systems Mgt
Certificate	Internet Administer
Diploma	Journalism, News Reporting
Degree	Journalism, News Reporting
Diploma	Photography
Apprentice	Printing and Graphic Arts Craftsman
Journeyman	Printing and Graphic Arts Craftsman

Employment Opportunities

Growth:

Most respondents were confident about the employment opportunities in the sector in the next three to five years. Continued strength in the local economies as well as increased demand for specialized services in the areas of graphics, recording, movie making, and computing are fuelling growth in this sector.

Population growth is also improving employment prospects in this sector. Companies active in the Fort McMurray and Grande Prairie area are doing especially well.

Stable:

Respondents who felt the employment opportunities in the sector were stable felt the apparent weakness in the retail sector was dampening growth in their sector. Print media traditionally relies heavily on ad revenue to survive.

In addition, a radio manager noted companies have not recovered transition costs when many companies moved from AM formats to FM formats. He also mentioned that computers dramatically changed how the radio industry works and resulted in a net loss of jobs in the industry. Many radio shows are pre-recorded and consequently there has been a reduction positions available especially in the broadcasting field of the radio industry. However, companies now require more employees specializing in digital and computer technologies.

Competition for positions in the radio industry, particularly in broadcasting, is stiff with very few positions available and a fair number of people trained in the profession. Unfortunately, because there is a glut of candidates for few positions, it has also meant employers can pay less relative to other sectors of the economy. There is however a continued shortage of female broadcasters, according to one respondent.

Respondents felt employment opportunities in the sector are stable where the population was steady, for example, in the Peace River area.

Changes in employment opportunities:

Growth in the computer industry, population growth, and better economic prospects in Alberta as a whole are improving employment prospects in the Communication Sector. Graduates with specialized computer skills are in increased demand but employers report employees with skills in this area are still not difficult to find.

Increased reliance on the Internet and the installation of high speed Internet in most communities is improving employment prospects in the some parts of the Sector. Respondents recorded increased demand for graphics and specialized printing projects. Opportunities on the Internet, specifically web page design and Internet radio, were also mentioned as potential growth areas for the sector.

Current hiring practices:

Currently hiring practices in the sector are diverse. Print media relies heavily on advertising in papers. Radio stations and graphics companies are more likely to use Internet to advertise

positions. Other employers noted that they are using web site advertising and job banks to advertise for positions. Still others recruit directly from colleges to fill positions with editorial and supervisory staff promoted inside their own organizations.

Two employers noted that they still have problems finding trained professionals willing to work in the sector. One working in print media noted a difficulty finding employees because the wages are low relative to other sectors of the economy. Another employer noted that professionals working in the field of graphics are still hard to find and the solution of this employer was to train employees internally.

How hiring practices will change:

Employers report an increased demand for specialized training in the sector. Employers in the sector expect to see an increased demand for technical skills especially graphics and computer technology. One respondent reported increased frustration when dealing with unskilled employees but because of increased competition in the workforce for employees with technical skills he expected the situation to continue.

CONSTRUCTION, MANUFACTURING, AND TRADES

General Trends in the Sector

Dramatic growth in the Oil and Gas Sector has arguably affected the Construction, Manufacturing and Trades Sector more than any other sector. Demand for skilled employees to work on huge construction projects in the in Fort McMurray in particular, has resulted in shortages in employees trained to work in construction across northern Alberta. Where the 2003 Professional Workforce Scan reported the growth in employment opportunities in this sector largely in the Fort McMurray area, this year the sector is strong overall with the Fort McMurray area still leading the growth. Large centres including, Fort McMurray, Grande Prairie and the Cold Lake/Bonnyville area are noticing significant population increases so there are corresponding opportunities in residential and commercial construction.

The Manufacturing industries are also noticing strong growth especially in those companies involved in serving the Oil and Gas Sector.

9 out of 9 stated they felt the sector was growing
0 out of 9 stated they felt the sector was stable
0 out of 9 stated they felt the sector was declining

As with most sectors involved with industry, a shortage of tradespeople is developing. Most employers who responded to the scan are convinced the problem will become critical in the next few years.

Fields of study that are in high demand:

Masters	Architecture
Certificate	Automotive Technician
Certificate	Building/Heating Inspector

Apprentice	Carpenter
Journeyman	Carpenter
Certificate	Carpentry
Diploma	Construction Engineering
Degree	Construction Engineering
Certificate	Diesel Mechanic
Apprentice	Electrician
Journeyman	Electrician
Diploma	Heavy Equipment Technician
Apprentice	Heavy Equipment Technician
Journeyman	Heavy Equipment Technician
Apprentice	Instrument Mechanic
Journeyman	Instrument Mechanic
Certificate	Instrumentation Technology
Diploma	Instrumentation Technology
Apprentice	Iron Worker
Journeyman	Iron Worker
Certificate	Machinist
Apprentice	Machinist
Journeyman	Machinist
Degree	Materials Engineering
Diploma	Materials Engineering Technology
Degree	Mechanical Engineering
Diploma	Mechanical Engineering Technology
Certificate	Millwright
Apprentice	Millwright
Journeyman	Millwright
Certificate	Outdoor Power Equipment Technician
Diploma	Petroleum Engineering Technologies
Diploma	Piping Technologies (Non-plumbing)
Apprentice	Plumber
Journeyman	Plumber
Diploma	Power Engineering
Apprentice	Sheet-metal Worker
Journeyman	Sheet-metal Worker
Degree	Survey Engineering
Certificate	Welding
Apprentice	Welding
Journeyman	Welding

Fields of study that are also in high demand in other sectors:

Certificate	Diesel Mechanic
Apprentice	Electrician
Journeyman	Electrician
Diploma	Heavy Equipment Technician
Apprentice	Heavy Equipment Technician
Journeyman	Heavy Equipment Technician

Certificate	Instrumentation Technology
Diploma	Instrumentation Technology
Degree	Mechanical Engineering
Certificate	Millwright
Apprentice	Millwright
Journeyman	Millwright
Diploma	Power Engineering
Journeyman	Welding

Fields of study that one or more respondents find hard to recruit:

Certificate	Automotive Technician
Apprentice	Carpenter
Journeyman	Carpenter
Certificate	Carpentry
Certificate	Diesel Mechanic
Apprentice	Electrician
Journeyman	Electrician
Diploma	Heavy Equipment Technician
Apprentice	Heavy Equipment Technician
Journeyman	Heavy Equipment Technician
Apprentice	Instrument Mechanic
Journeyman	Instrument Mechanic
Certificate	Instrumentation Technology
Diploma	Instrumentation Technology
Apprentice	Insulator
Journeyman	Insulator
Apprentice	Iron Worker
Journeyman	Iron Worker
Certificate	Machinist
Apprentice	Machinist
Journeyman	Machinist
Certificate	Millwright
Apprentice	Millwright
Journeyman	Millwright
Certificate	Outdoor Power Equipment Technician
Certificate	Partsman
Apprentice	Plumber
Journeyman	Plumber
Certificate	Refrigeration and Air Conditioning
Apprentice	Sheet-metal Worker
Journeyman	Sheet-metal Worker
Certificate	Welding
Apprentice	Welding
Journeyman	Welding

Employment Opportunities

The shortage of skilled tradesmen is getting more serious in this sector with each passing year. Employers expect retirements to exacerbate the problem. Most respondents felt that growth in the economy and continued shortages of tradesmen will translate into tremendous opportunities for new graduates.

Growth:

Respondents were unanimous in their view that this sector was growing. The Alberta economy is experiencing tremendous growth fueled largely by the Oil and Gas sector. Oil sands development has increased not only industrial construction but has fueled a corresponding growth in commercial and residential construction. One respondent estimated as much as $50 billion dollars will be committed to construction in the next few years.

The demand for infrastructure has increased the demand for tradespeople and engineers in construction. Respondents specifically noted shortages in mechanics, millwrights, electricians, and carpenters. In addition, one respondent noted significant shortages for all types of engineers.

Changes in employment opportunities:

This sector will experience labour shortages in the coming years. An aging workforce and fewer graduates in the trades as well as growth in the sector will translate into a shortage in skilled tradespeople. Most respondents expected these shortages to become critical in the near future.

Current hiring practices:

Hiring practices are adapting very quickly in this sector, likely because of an increased demand for skilled employees in the sector. Most employers use print advertising. However, respondents noted relying on other types of advertising as increased competition for skilled labour develops. Some report the use of recruiters. Two respondents noted the need to recruit nationally and internationally to find trained professionals and tradespeople. Another respondent reported attending career fairs in colleges to recruit tradespeople.

Other employers are recruiting more employees whom they expect to train on the job. One respondent mentioned recruiting employees through the Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP). Another respondent mentioned recruiting Aboriginal employees, and training them through programs specifically geared to this group.

How hiring practices will change:

Most employers in the sector felt that changes in hiring practices were imminent in the sector. The critical shortage of tradespeople has meant that there is less emphasis on advertising and more on increasing the number of graduates from the trades. Four respondents mentioned needing to recruit internationally for tradespeople. Two mentioned the need for in-house training for employees wishing to complete training. One respondent is optimistic that as the shortage of tradespeople increases there will be improved wages and an improvement in the image of tradespeople. When this happens, more young people will want to enter the trades.

EDUCATION

General Trends in the Sector

In recent years, this sector has experienced cuts in funding and declining student enrollments and, perhaps not surprisingly, some respondents developed a pessimistic outlook about employment opportunities in the sector. There are dramatic differences in the employment opportunities between regions if different parts of the region. Larger centres, with economies and population growth driven by the oil and gas industry, are seeing dramatic increases in enrollments. On the other hand, the 2001 census showed small population declines in many smaller northern Alberta communities. These communities saw declines in student enrollments and respondents were more conservative in their outlook.

7 out of 12 stated they felt the sector was growing
4 out of 12 stated they felt the sector was stable
1 out of 12 stated they felt the sector was declining

Fields of study that are in high demand:

Degree	Adult Education
Masters	Education
Masters	Education Administration
Degree	Education Math
Degree	Education Science
Degree	Special Education
Degree	Speech Pathology

Fields of study also in high demand in other sectors:

Degree	Speech Pathology

Fields of study that one or more respondents find hard to recruit:

Certificate	Aboriginal Child & Family Services
Diploma	Aboriginal Child & Family Services
Degree	Career & Technology Studies
Degree	Commerce (Management & Organization)
Certificate	Computer Science Technology
Degree	Cree Language (Elementary)
Degree	Cree Language (Secondary)
Degree	Early Childhood Services
Masters	Economics
Masters	Education

Degree	Education (Native Studies)
Degree	Education (Science)
Masters	Education Administration
PhD	Education Administration
Degree	Elementary Education (Specialized)
Degree	French as a 2nd Language
Degree	French Immersion (Elementary)
Degree	French Immersion (Secondary)
Degree	French Language
Degree	Home Economics
Certificate	Information Technology
Diploma	Information Technology & Systems Mgt
Degree	Library & Information Studies
Certificate	Life Skills Coaching
Degree	Math/Science
Diploma	Mental Health Worker
Degree	Music/Band
Certificate	Native Cultural Arts Instructor
Diploma	Native Cultural Arts Instructor
Degree	Native Studies
Degree	Secondary Education (General)
Degree	Special Education
Degree	Speech Pathology
Certificate	Teacher's Aid
Degree	Vocational Guidance & Counseling
Masters	Vocational Guidance & Counseling

Employment Opportunities

Growth:

Continued population growth in larger centres will significantly increase the demand for teachers in some regions. The population of Fort McMurray is expected to peak at over 75,000 in the next five years. Grande Prairie is also experiencing significant population growth. Demand for professionals in the Education Sector will continue to grow in these regions. However, one can continue to expect turnover in those communities. Teachers come to the community and stay two years to achieve their credentials and then move to southern communities or communities where housing costs are lower, reported one respondent.

Respondents reported a continued demand for some educational specialties. Traditional shortages of teachers with math and science backgrounds continue. An initiative to decrease the teacher student ratio in kindergarten to grade three classes has also resulted in an increased demand for teachers with ECS training.

An expected increase in government funding has also buoyed prospects in the sector.

Stable:

In other areas population has not changed or has declined. This has translated into decreased enrollments and funding, and in some instances into school closures. However, respondents reported that even those areas report that teaching positions have been lost in some communities but teachers usually find positions in nearby communities.

Declining:

One respondent noted significant reductions in area populations and resulting reductions in staffing needs.

Changes in employment opportunities:

We are also seeing changes in the delivery of education. More schools are using various delivery methods including distance education and video conferencing and an increased demand for staff specializing in information technology.

Emphasis on early literacy will mean changes in the Educational Sector especially in primary schools. Government guidelines have decreased the maximum class size in Kindergartens and consequently school divisions are looking for more Kindergarten to Grade Three teachers. Two respondents noted that they are looking for Early Childhood Specialists. Another noted a significant shortage of accredited psychologists, speech pathologists, and occupational therapists in the sector.

Most respondents reported that expected retirements would mean increased opportunities for graduates. One respondent reported that the majority of his teaching staff will retire in the next six years.

Current hiring practices:

Hiring practices in this sector are aggressive in regions experiencing population growth. Most respondents mentioned advertising in print media as a strategy, three mentioned advertising in professional journals. Most mentioned using job fairs with some employers going to universities in the southern part of the province to recruit candidates.

Out of province recruitment is growing increasingly common. Four respondents mentioned looking outside the province by advertising websites and in professional journals. One respondent even had a staff member attend a job fair in the Atlantic Provinces.

Universities are doing a lot of liaison between job seekers and employers in this sector. In addition to hosting job fairs, universities are supplying lists of graduates to employers.

Surprisingly, only one respondent mentioned using incentive packages for new recruits. This respondent reported that the employer pays one half of moving expenses when a candidate accepts a position.

How hiring practices will change:

Respondents expected that the demand for graduates would become more competitive in the coming years. Employers in this sector are already using a variety of recruitment strategies

but they expected that they would need to adapt even more to compete for skilled professionals. Two respondents expected to increase their reliance on web based advertising. Two others expected they would travel more to recruit candidates.

Two respondents mentioned the need for more programs in colleges in the north. One respondent suggested bringing a Bachelor of Education program to Keyano College in Fort McMurray to train residents currently living there. Another mentioned increased programming in northern colleges would increase demand for instructors with Masters Degrees and Doctorate degrees.

FINANCE AND INSURANCE

General Trends in the Sector

The 2004 Annual Labour Review rated the Financial Sector as the third fastest growing sector in terms of employment in Alberta. With a 5.8% growth in employment in Alberta, it ranked only behind the Oil and Gas Sector and Construction. Respondents agreed with this assessment and were very optimistic about employment in this sector in northern Alberta. Population growth in major centres combined with an aging and increasingly wealthy population has translated into more demand for financial services. The strength of the economy as a whole, as well as rapid growth in the Oil and Gas Sector translated into a significant amount of consumer confidence.

10 out of 11 stated they felt the sector was growing
0 out of 11 stated they felt the sector was stable
0 out of 11 stated they felt the sector was declining
1 respondent did not respond to this question

Fields of study that are in high demand:

Degree	Business & Commerce
Degree	Commerce (Finance)

Fields of study that are also in high demand across other sectors:

Neither of the fields of study in high demand was in high demand in other sectors.

Fields of study that one or more respondents find hard to recruit:

Diploma	Accounting
Degree	Business & Commerce
Certificate	Business Administration
Diploma	Business Administration
Degree	Business Administration
Masters	Business Administration (MBA)
Diploma	Career / Employment Counseling
Diploma	Certified General Accountant (Designation) CGA

Degree	Certified Management Accountant (Designation) CMA
Degree	Commerce (Accounting) CA
Degree	Commerce (Finance)
Degree	Commerce (Insurance)
Degree	Commerce (Management & Organization)
Diploma	Computer Networking Specialist
Diploma	Computer Programming & Software
Degree	Computer Science
Certificate	Computer Science Technology
Diploma	Computer Systems Analyst
Degree	Computer Systems Analyst
Diploma	Customer & Public Relations
Degree	Customer & Public Relations
Degree	Economics
Masters	Economics
Diploma	Financial Management (General)
Degree	Financial Management (General)
Diploma	Human Resources Management
Degree	Human Resources Management
Degree	Industrial Management & Relations
Certificate	Information Technology
Diploma	Information Technology & Systems Mgt
Diploma	Insurance Administration
Diploma	Land (Real Estate) Assessment & Appraisal
Degree	Law
Masters	Law
Degree	Management
Diploma	Marketing & Sales
Degree	Marketing & Sales
Diploma	Marketing Management
Diploma	Retailing & Sales
Degree	Retailing & Sales

Growth:

Ten of the eleven respondents in this sector agreed employment opportunities in the Financial and Insurance Sector was growing. This almost universal optimism appears to stem from a number of factors. Five respondents specifically mentioned the aging of the baby boomers has increased demand for financial products and services. One respondent also mentioned that there has been more demand for "intergenerational wealth transferring."

Regional population growth has also affected the growth in the sector. Three respondents reported increasing opportunities could be attributed to population growth in and around large urban communities.

Another respondent mentioned that increased mobility of individuals in the career market, and an increased number of self-employed individuals, has translated to increased individual responsibility for financial planning. "Gone are the days when you worked and retired from one company," summarized one respondent.

Employment Opportunities

Most respondents were positive about employment opportunities in the sector. Population growth, an aging workforce and increased demand for financial services and products will translate into increased employment opportunities in the sector.

Changes in employment opportunities:

The dramatic optimism in the sector is translating into not only an increased demand for trained employees but also has changed the types of employees needed in some areas. One respondent noted a significant number of people employed in the Financial and Insurance Sectors are retiring creating vacancies that need filling. Two respondents noted that they are experiencing a great deal of turnover because of retirements, maternity leaves or individuals leaving to work in southern centres. Another trend was the aging population changing the types of specialties needed in the sector. Two respondents reported the trend to retirement planning will shift to a need for intergenerational wealth transfer and estate planners.

One respondent also noted that there would be an increasing trend to consolidate financial institutions in larger centres. On the other hand, one respondent mentioned that there would be more need for professionals with an agriculture background in the future.

Current hiring practices:

Hiring practices in this sector rely on traditional methods such as advertising in print media. However, like other sectors, networking is becoming more important when recruiting professionals. All the respondents mentioned referrals and networking in the industry as a common way of recruiting financial professionals. One respondent mentioned using recruiters to find qualified candidates.

Colleges are a good place to start searches for qualified people. Three employers mentioned visiting colleges to recruit professionals; two others specifically mentioned job fairs. One respondent mentioned a reward program for professionals able to recruit others in the industry to their own firms.

Companies are now conducting more extensive searches to fill positions than they have in the past. One respondent mentioned looking to Ontario, Saskatewan, Manitoba, and British Columbia to fill positions. Two respondents mentioned using the Internet to advertise positions and one of those mentioned national and international websites.

How hiring practices will change:

Half of the respondents felt that hiring practices would not change in the coming years. However, others felt that the industry would have to become far more competitive to compete for qualified individuals. There would be increasing demand for financial and insurance specialists and the companies would have to be more assertive to attract qualified candidates. One respondent mentioned recruiting more candidates straight out of college. Another felt he would be better to find candidates that are more experienced. Some felt that they would have to offer more salary incentives and flexible hours to compete for candidates with companies in other sectors, especially the Oil and Gas Sector. One respondent felt that he would be recruiting more candidates from the rural areas.

GOVERNMENT & ADMINISTRATION

General Trends in the Sector

The 2004 Careers update reports that the Government and Administration sector is expected to see modest increases in employment. Law enforcement, however, should see significant expansion in the next few years. Like other sectors, Government and Administration is seeing significant expansions in communities experiencing population growth.

Respondents reported reliance on contracted services is resulting in some job losses. This not only is less costly to employers in this sector; it also allows more access to specialized skills.

6 out of 13 stated they felt the sector was growing
7 out of 13 stated they felt the sector was stable
0 out of 13 stated they felt the sector was declining

Fields of study that are in high demand:

Degree	Civil Engineering
Degree	Commerce (Accounting) CA
Degree	Water and Wastewater Treatment

Fields of study that are also in high demand in other sectors:

Degree	Commerce (Accounting) CA

Fields of study that one or more respondents find hard to recruit:

Diploma	Accounting
Diploma	Administration Technology
Diploma	Building/Heating Inspector
Degree	Business & Commerce
Certificate	Business Administration
Diploma	Business Administration
Degree	Business Administration
Diploma	Certified General Accountant (Designation) CGA
Degree	Certified Management Accountant (Designation) CMA
Degree	Civil Engineering
Diploma	Civil Engineering Technology
Degree	Commerce (Accounting) CA
Degree	Commerce (Finance)
Degree	Commerce (Management & Organization)
Degree	Communications and Culture
Diploma	Computer Programming & Software
Degree	Computer Science

Diploma	Criminal Justice
Degree	Customer & Public Relations
Degree	Economics
Masters	Economics
Diploma	Energy & Natural Resources Technology
Degree	Financial Management (General)
Diploma	Firefighting
Degree	Genetics
Diploma	Geographic Information Services
Degree	Human Resources Management
Degree	Industrial Management & Relations
Diploma	Information Technology & Systems Mgt
Diploma	Land (Real Estate) Assessment & Appraisal
Degree	Law
Degree	Management
Degree	Native Studies
Diploma	Police studies
Diploma	Public Administration
Degree	Public Administration
Diploma	Recreation & Leisure Services
Degree	Water and Wastewater Treatment

Employment Opportunities

Growth:

Almost half of the respondents to the scan felt that employment opportunities in the Government and Administration Sector were expanding in northern Alberta. Those who said it was expanding felt that population growth, increasing demand for services, and an increased interest in economic development caused this growth in employment opportunities.

Population growth necessitated expansions in government infrastructure in some northern Alberta communities. The growth of Grande Prairie and Fort McMurray placed demands on infrastructure that governments are scrambling to keep up with. In addition, respondents felt that population growth has not only affected these communities but has affected outlying communities as well.

Respondents from Aboriginal communities reported there is a demand for a wider range of services developing in their communities.

This sector, like most others, is experiencing increased demand for professionals as baby boomers retire. One respondent felt this trend would continue for at least the next ten years. In addition, with this aging population there will also be demands for different kinds of services.

Stable:

Respondents who felt that employment opportunities in their sector were stable attributed this to two factors: first government funding has not allowed organizations to expand, and second

population declines in smaller communities are offsetting growth in other communities. One respondent reported that communities that rely primarily on industries such as agriculture and forestry are experiencing population stagnation or decline which results in fewer demands on government infrastructure.

Three respondents mentioned that increased pressure from government downloading and cutbacks were causing stresses in the sector and resulting in fewer employment opportunities.

Changes in employment opportunities:

Respondents expect significant changes in employment opportunities in this sector. An aging workforce, increased technical requirements on staff, funding pressures, and competition from outside the sector for qualified personnel mean that candidates in this sector will have to adapt to changing realities. One respondent reported candidates could expect more room for advancement as retirements force internal promotions.

One respondent summarized the situation well. "Considering our organization's internal demographics and aging workforce, we are experiencing increasing succession pressures in terms of leadership, professional, technical and other staff requirements. Given the aging labour force, demographics, and considering similar issues faced by other organizations locally, regionally, provincially and nationally, we face increasing competition within the sector. To recruit and retain qualified staff to meet our current, anticipated and emerging needs is growing more difficult."

There will also be changes in the types of employees required in government. Aboriginal communities are expecting to see increased demand for candidates specialized in resource management, administration, and social services, according to one respondent. Other respondents noted that they would have more demand for people with technical backgrounds.

Two respondents noted the need for specialists in economic development. One respondent reported smaller communities might collaborate with other communities to offer full-time positions when a full-time position in one community is not feasible.

Increased expectations of provincial and federal governments on municipal governments may result in some employment increases but will surely result in more complex jobs at the municipal level. One respondent mentioned the need to hire more part-time staff to fill positions as provincial and federal governments download services to the municipal level. Funding limitations is also causing some pressure in the Government and Administration Sector, as fewer staff members will provide a wider range of services. "Higher skill sets are required {by staff who must cope} with increases in the complexity of tasks," reported one respondent.

Current hiring practices:

Like other employers, governments are now having to recruit provincially and nationally, and advertise for longer in order to fill positions. Increased competition from the private sector for candidates is one reason. This sector appears to rely heavily on print media to advertise positions.

Respondents also mentioned they needed to use more creative forms of recruitment and advertising. Respondents mentioned using search firms and networking in the industry and with peers. Two respondents specifically mentioned website advertising.

Recruiting in the Aboriginal communities poses some unique challenges. One respondent reported needing to adapt recruiting practices in the Aboriginal community. Networking is paramount in this community according to this respondent. They rely heavily on word of mouth to find the candidates they need. Another respondent reported using the Municipal Internship program to recruit local candidates and train them internally.

Other firms are offering incentives to attract candidates. One respondent listed moving allowances, flexible work arrangements, training contacts, and succession planning to cope with increasing challenges filling positions. Another respondent noted that employers are now focussing more on employee retention. He notes the need to be flexible and accommodating of their employees. Other respondents noted trying to promote and train internally.

How hiring practices will change:

Employers are finding they need to recruit further afield and advertise for longer periods of time to meet their needs. One respondent noted employers are using "head-hunter" services for high-demand positions. They are also forming partnerships with educational institutions for local training in response to the increased demand for skilled professionals, for example for professional planners and for trade apprentices.

Two respondents also noted that there have been changes in Human Resources. More focus is placed on competency based interviewing. One respondent noted that they are advertising their positions based on competencies. Employers are using Behavioural Descriptive interviewing as a way of predicting future behaviour in candidates. Pre-employment assessments are now being used in some organizations' interview processes.

Developing employees internally is more common. There is an increased focus on internships. Employers are doing more in house training and focussing on developing skills in current employees.

One respondent also noted needing to focus more on finding Aboriginal candidates. This employer is working on an Aboriginal strategy for workforce development. He reported partnerships with Aboriginal organizations to develop employees for the sector are more common than in the past. One example of this type of partnership is the AWPI (Aboriginal Workforce Participation Initiative.)

HOSPITALITY, RECREATION & TOURISM

General Trends in the Sector

Hospitality, Recreation, and Tourism is a sector where the employment opportunities are tied closely the strength of other sectors. The hospitality industry, which includes hotels and

restaurants, is not only is affected by the availability of disposable income but is also dependent on the needs of a mobile workforce. The growth in the Oil and Gas Sector has bolstered this part of the sector. The growth of the economy as a whole has also allowed more people to spend leisure dollars which has not only benefited hotels and restaurants but benefits the tourism and recreational industry.

However, some respondents explained that there is less growth in the tourism industries than in the hospitality industries. Respondents reported that while there are untapped opportunities in this industry, this part of the sector has not reached its potential. Most respondents in the tourism industry commented on the need to market travelling in the north more effectively.

5 out of 9 stated they felt the sector was growing
3 out of 9 stated they felt the sector was stable
0 out of 9 stated they felt the sector was declining
1 respondent did not respond to this question

Fields of study that are in high demand:

Diploma	Commercial Cook
Apprentice	Commercial Cook
Journeyman	Commercial Cook
Diploma	Food Services & Preparation
Diploma	Hotel & Food Administration
Diploma	Hotel Management
Degree	Hotel Management
Diploma	Native Management
Degree	Native Management
Diploma	Tourism and Hospitality

Fields of study that are also in high demand in other sectors:

Diploma	Food Services & Preparation
Degree	Native Management
Diploma	Tourism and Hospitality

Fields of study that one or more respondents find hard to recruit:

Degree	Business & Commerce
Certificate	Business Administration
Diploma	Business Administration
Degree	Business Administration
Masters	Business Administration (MBA)
Diploma	Certified General Accountant (Designation) CGA
Degree	Commerce (Accounting) CA
Degree	Commerce (Management & Organization)

Diploma	Commercial Baker
Apprentice	Commercial Baker
Diploma	Commercial Cook
Apprentice	Commercial Cook
Journeyman	Commercial Cook
Diploma	Food Services & Preparation
Diploma	Global Tourism & Marketing
Diploma	Hotel & Food Administration
Diploma	Marketing & Sales
Degree	Marketing & Sales
Diploma	Marketing Management
Diploma	Native Management
Degree	Native Management
Degree	Native Studies
Diploma	Office Administration
Diploma	Tourism and Hospitality

Employment Opportunities

There is some growth in certain parts of this sector. The hotel and service industries, which directly serve the oil and gas industries, are growing. Respondents were less optimistic if they represented the recreation and tourism industries. Those from the hotel and service industries felt that they had some use for professionals with hotel management backgrounds and business backgrounds. However, their biggest need was for service workers and front line staff. The tourism and recreation industries expressed some demand for professionals specializing in marketing.

Growth:

Four factors seem to be influencing the growth in this sector. First, the phenomenal growth of the oil and gas sector created spin off benefits for certain parts of this sector, reported four scan respondents. One respondent estimates there are three jobs created in the service sector for each job in the oil and gas industry. Regional population growth has also created opportunities. This growth has had a tremendous impact on growth in the sector in a number of communities, especially the cities of Grande Prairie and Fort McMurray and their surrounding areas. Another factor is the aging workforce. Retirements expected in the next few years will create openings for individuals entering the sector. There is also increasing mobility with employees moving between positions and companies, and there will be more openings for new graduates as a result.

Stable:

Three respondents felt that employment opportunities in the sector were stable. Two felt that while there was growth in the hotel industry because of oil industry development, the opportunities for tourism in the north are still underdeveloped. Another felt that the declines in the Agriculture Sector due to the BSE crisis have a dampening effect on the sector.

Changes in employment opportunities:

Over the next three to five years, there will be changes in the Hospitality Recreation and Tourism, according to our respondents. First, there will continue to be chronic shortages in the front line staff. However, more respondents noted the need for professional and management staff than in the 2003 Professional Workforce Scan. One respondent noted that the demand for professionals will include more demand for specialists in Human Resources. Two others saw opportunities for professional cooks, management, public relations, and marketing staff. One respondent felt that they would see an increased demand for marketing and interpretive specialists in the tourism industry. Another saw a demand for more information on cultural items and art from the Aboriginal community.

One respondent expected environmental concerns to affect this sector. He felt the weather would be more of a factor in the winter tourism industry.

Like many other sectors there are opportunities for self-employment if people can identify an opportunity to exploit in this sector. Increasing competition and global influences create niche markets on a regular basis, reported one respondent. New graduates may have opportunities if they can position themselves to exploit them.

Current hiring and recruitment practices:

The competition for skilled workers has motivated some employers to be more creative and aggressive in their recruitment strategies. One respondent reported that traditional print ads use more creative strategies than in the past. Employers are attending job and career fairs, sometimes in partnership with other companies in and out of the sector, to attract new employees. Other employees are offering scholarships to candidates with mandatory work requirements.

There is also an increased focus on retention in the sector from the previous Workforce Scan. Two respondents mentioned employers have improved employee benefits and wages. Another mentioned childcare is offered to employees.

How will recruitment and hiring practices change:

Some employers are attempting to adapt to the increasing competition for skilled workers. One respondent emphasized the need to retain current employees. She mentioned her company offers retainment bonuses to employees who stay for more than six months. Others intend to start recruiting in other provinces.

LOGGING, FORESTRY, & WOOD INDUSTRY

General Trends in the Sector

The 2004 Alberta Careers Update predicts that the sector will be stable this year, but the respondents in this sector seem slightly more optimistic about employment opportunities in northern Alberta. Recent court decisions in the softwood lumber dispute in favour of

Canadian interests have contributed some optimism but some respondents in the sector still are conservative in their outlook.

Environmental issues will create some challenges for the sector in the next few years. The Kyoto protocol will increase pressure on the sector in spite of the Provincial Governments' opposition, according to one respondent. Increased pressure on existing wood allocations and competition with the Oil and Gas sector for land allocated to both industries has created some challenges that both industries are trying to overcome. In addition, new research has allowed the forest industry to improve the output of some existing forestry allocations, and specialists in this area will continue to be in demand.

5 out of 10 stated they felt the sector was growing
5 out of 10 stated they felt the sector was stable
0 out of 10 stated they felt the sector was declining

Fields of study that are in high demand:

Degree	Chemical Engineering
Diploma	Chemical Engineering Technology
Journeyman	Electrician
Diploma	Heavy Equipment Technician
Certificate	Millwright
Apprentice	Millwright
Journeyman	Millwright

Fields of study that are also in high demand in other sectors:

Degree	Chemical Engineering
Diploma	Chemical Engineering Technology
Journeyman	Electrician
Diploma	Heavy Equipment Technician
Certificate	Millwright
Apprentice	Millwright
Journeyman	Millwright

Fields of study that one or more respondents find hard to recruit:

Diploma	Accounting
Degree	Chemical Engineering
Degree	Conservation, Biology & Management
Certificate	Diesel Mechanic
Diploma	Electrical Technology
Degree	Electrical/Electronic Engineering
Apprentice	Electrician
Journeyman	Electrician
Degree	Genetics
Diploma	Geographic Information Services
Journeyman	Heavy Equipment Technician

Diploma	Human Resources Management
Degree	Industrial Management & Relations
Diploma	Information Technology & Systems Mgt
Certificate	Instrumentation Technology
Diploma	Instrumentation Technology
Certificate	Machinist
Apprentice	Machinist
Journeyman	Machinist
Diploma	Marketing Management
Degree	Mechanical Engineering
Certificate	Millwright
Apprentice	Millwright
Journeyman	Millwright
Certificate	Outdoor Power Equipment Technician
Diploma	Power Engineering
Diploma	Purchasing/Materials Management
Diploma	Renewable Resource Management
Certificate	Welding
Certificate	Wood Products Processing
Degree	Wood Products Processing

Employment Opportunities

Respondents were split as to whether the employment opportunities in this sector were growing or stable, but it is fair to say that optimism has grown since respondents were surveyed for the 2003 for the Professional Workforce Scan. A few new operations, expansions to existing operations, and retirements are providing some opportunities in this sector. There is however a continued concern over the availability of wood fibre which might affect future employment opportunities.

Growth:

While the 2004 Alberta Career's Update predicted there would be no net growth in employment opportunities in the Forestry, Logging and Wood Industries Sector there does seem to be some reason for optimism about employment in northern Alberta. Three respondents mentioned that mills are expanding and one respondent mentioned a new mill is under construction.

Another factor in the growth of opportunities was the aging workforce in the sector. Like all other sectors, respondents are predicting retirements in the next three to five years will create opportunities for new graduates. One respondent mentioned there is an increasing demand for truck drivers, heavy-duty mechanics, and other tradesmen.

Stable:

Five respondents felt employment opportunities in the sector would remain stable in the next few years. Respondents felt that mechanization and modernization has meant that mills need fewer staff to run. In addition, companies active in the sector are concerned that there are no new wood allocations available if companies wish to expand.

Changes in employment opportunities:

Increased competition for skilled workers, largely from the Oil and Gas Sector, is a major challenge for companies active in the sector. "Alberta faces a huge employment challenge in the future. There will be greater availability of work and a greater shortage of qualified labour," reports one respondent. Tradesmen are in very short supply and the problem is expected to grow worse in the coming years. Two respondents specifically mentioned electricians, millwrights, welders, truck drivers and mechanics as being in short supply. In addition, respondents expect retirements in the sector to increase opportunities for graduates.

One respondent mentioned two trends that will change employment requirements for companies in the sector: changes in safety standards and changes in environmental standards. One respondent mentioned that monitoring employee safety and keeping training up to date has become more of a challenge. Most organizations now require full-time staff to monitor safety compliance. Organizations are continuing to look for employees with environmental training to cope with changing environmental standards.

Current hiring and recruitment practices:

Employers have to become more assertive and creative in their human resource policies in this sector if they want to compete successfully for candidates. Two respondents mentioned that one of their organizations' priorities is employee retention. One of those respondents reported companies are now more likely to train and promote existing employees than recruit from outside the organization.

Recruitment practices are also growing more aggressive. Two respondents stated it was now commonplace for larger organizations to employ recruiters and employment agencies to fill positions. Other organizations are expanding their searches nationally and internationally. Two respondents mentioned using national industry magazines and Internet sites to advertise vacancies.

Interview techniques are also changing. Behavioural Descriptive Interviews where demonstrated past behaviour is used to predict future behaviour is now commonplace especially in larger companies.

How hiring practices will change:

Most respondents identified some changes the sector needed to make in order to become more competitive finding qualified staff. Two mentioned the need to expand their searches nationally and internationally when recruiting candidates.

Other respondents mentioned the need to promote forestry as a career. Respondents specifically mentioned Aboriginal groups and high school students as target populations for the marketing campaigns. Another respondent felt that his or her own employees could be trained and promoted as a way of filling skill positions.

MEDICAL AND HEALTH CARE

General Trends in the Sector

While the population in Alberta is younger than the national average, it is still aging rapidly. According the Careers Update 2004 we are seeing the first wave of baby boomers reaching their sixties, and can expect the peak to hit in 2010. The impact on the health care system will be staggering. However, this will provide a huge opportunity for students interested in careers in health and medicine.

The way we provide health care is rapidly changing. We are relying more on technology than we have in the past with changes in diagnostics, drugs, surgeries, and treatments. Nanotechnology, a new field integrating physics and engineering, will assist diagnostics and medical research. Information management will continue to become more streamlined in the sector necessitating more specialists in the field and fewer traditional administrative staff. Diagnostics will also change with the use of telehealth and long-distance diagnostics. The future will also see more emphasis on holistic medicine and preventative health.

In northern Alberta recruitment and retention of trained medical personnel has always been problematic and, unfortunately, our respondents seemed to agree that this trend would continue. Graduates are in short supply, and few graduates are interested in rural practices. Those that are interested in working in rural Alberta, tend to move to communities in the south. Another complicating factor is the high cost of living in the north, especially in the communities experiencing oil and gas development. Fort McMurray and Grande Prairie are already experiencing significant problems filling positions; the cost of housing make it difficult for even well-paid employees. In addition, there will continue to be a draw on trained medical staff to the United States. Some respondents reported they will continue to recruit their staff from overseas and more respondents are lobbying policy makers to streamline the international accreditation process.

7 out of 7 stated they felt the sector was growing
0 out of 7 stated they felt the sector was stable
0 out of 7 stated they felt the sector was declining

Fields of study that are in high demand:

Diploma	Combined X-Ray & Lab Technology
Diploma	Diagnostic Medical Sonography
Diploma	Emergency Medical Technologist: Paramedic
MD/PhD	General Practice Medicine
Masters	Health Promotion/Community Development
Degree	Health Promotion/Community Development (B.Sc/A)
Certificate	Licensed Practical Nurse
Diploma	Mental Health Worker
Diploma	Nurse (RN)
Masters	Nurse Practitioner
Degree	Nursing

Degree	Nursing: Community Health Nurse
Degree	Occupational Therapy
MD/PhD	Orthopedic Surgeon
Degree	Pharmacy
Diploma	Psychiatric Nursing
Masters	Registered Psychologist
Diploma	Rehabilitation Practitioner
Degree	Speech Pathology

Fields of study that are also in high demand in other sectors:

Diploma	Psychiatric Nursing
Diploma	Rehabilitation Practitioner
Degree	Speech Pathology

Fields of study that one or more respondents find hard to recruit:

Diploma	Administration Technology
Masters	Audiology
Diploma	Combined X-Ray & Lab Technology
Certificate	Community Health Representative
Diploma	Community Rehabilitation
Diploma	Dental Assistant
Degree	Dental Hygiene
Masters	Dentistry
Diploma	Denturist
Diploma	Diagnostic Medical Sonography
Diploma	Dietary Technology
Degree	Dietician (B.Sc. Nursing)
Masters	Doctor of Chiropractic
Diploma	Doula
Certificate	Early Childhood Services
Certificate	Emergency Medical Responder
Certificate	Emergency Medical Technician: Ambulance
Diploma	Emergency Medical Technologist: Paramedic
Diploma	Emergency Services Technology
Masters	Epidemiology
MD/PhD	General Practice Medicine
Certificate	Health Development and Administration
Masters	Health Promotion/Community Development
Degree	Health Promotion/Community Development (B.Sc/A)
Masters	Health Services Administrator
Certificate	Licensed Practical Nurse
Diploma	Medical Lab Technology
Diploma	Medical X-ray Technology
Diploma	Mental Health Worker
Masters	Naturopathic Doctor

Diploma	Nuclear Medicine Technology
Diploma	Nurse (RN)
Masters	Nurse Practitioner
Degree	Nursing
Degree	Nursing: Community Health Nurse
Degree	Nursing: Nutrition & Food Sciences
Degree	Occupational Therapy
Masters	Optometry
MD/PhD	Orthopedic Surgeon
Degree	Pharmacy
Diploma	Pharmacy Technology
Degree	Physiotherapy
Diploma	Psychiatric Nursing
Degree	Public Health Nurse
Masters	Public Health Policy
Diploma	Public Health Science (Inspector)
Diploma	Radiation Therapy
Diploma	Recreation Therapy
Degree	Recreation Therapy
Degree	Registered Psychiatric Nurse (RPN)
Masters	Registered Psychologist
Diploma	Respiratory Technician
Diploma	Social Work/Welfare (Aboriginal Specialization)
Diploma	Social Work/Welfare (General)
Degree	Social Work/Welfare (General)
Masters	Social Work/Welfare (General)
MD/PhD	Specialist - Anesthesia
MD/PhD	Specialist - Cardiology
MD/PhD	Specialist - Obstetrics Gynecology
Degree	Speech Pathology

Employment Opportunities

All of the seven respondents in this sector agreed that opportunities in the Medical and Health Sector were growing. An aging population, population growth in the north, and changes in medical diagnostics and technology mean that graduates from this sector can expect many choices to be open to them. Unlike the respondents for the 2003 Professional Workforce Scan no one mentioned shortages in funding as limiting opportunities in the Medical and Health Sector.

Not only will there be shortages in doctors, nurses, occupational therapists, diagnostic specialists, speech therapists, and physiotherapists, but employers are also expecting to see dramatic shortages in other personnel. Those trained in the rapidly developing field of diagnostics and information management will be in short supply, according to the 2004 Alberta Careers Update.

Growth:

All seven respondents mentioned the aging population as a predictor for future growth of employment opportunities in the sector. Programs will need to expand to address increasing demand on services. Two respondents mentioned assisted living arrangements. Within the next couple of years respondents believe we will begin to see dramatic increases in the number of retirements, and consequently the number of vacancies open to graduates will increase. Regional population growth is also creating increased demand for trained professionals. Administrators working in and around Fort McMurray have to be very aggressive to recruit and retain staff. One respondent mentioned giving out retainment bonuses after six months. Another respondent from that region recommended accrediting the community colleges in these communities to be able to train medical staff.

Two respondents also mentioned that competition from heavy industry for trained medical staff has increased demand. There has been more demand for Emergency Medical Responders, Emergency Medical Technicians, and Paramedics. They reported that retirements in the industry would increase opportunities even more.

Changes in employment opportunities:

Respondents agreed the future holds many opportunities in the medical and health sector. A respondent representing the mental health sector mentioned needing more nurses with psychology backgrounds, as well as social workers and professionals with training working with Aboriginal populations.

Changes in technologies will also create a demand for graduates able to use them. Two specifically mentioned needing people who can work with technologies pertaining to distance diagnostics and information management.

Current hiring and recruitment practices:

Hiring and recruitment practices are becoming more aggressive in the Medical and Health Sector. Two respondents mentioned using contacts in the colleges and attending career fairs to recruit staff. Respondents also mentioned networking with contacts in other communities, colleges, and the Aboriginal communities.

Traditional advertising is still popular though most respondents mentioned having to advertise further afield to fill positions. Some advertise in communities in southern Alberta, others mention using professional magazines and the Internet to advertise in other provinces and internationally.

For some organizations, a solution for some labour shortages has been to train staff locally. Partnerships with community colleges have resulted in some practical nursing graduatesas well as local training of Emergency Medical Responders, Emergency Medical Technicians, and Paramedics. One respondent reported that she would like to see this expanded to include a degreed Nursing program.

How hiring practices will change:

Respondents agreed that human resource departments would become more important in the future. They will need to get more aggressive to recruit professionals. One respondent

reported that if organizations are to succeed in bringing candidates into the north recruitment campaigns need more resources. Another reported organizations need increased screening to make sure candidates' skills fit the positions they enter.

MINING, OIL, & GAS

General Trends in the Sector

The outlook for the Mining, Oil and Gas sector is very strong and looks like it will remain that way in the long-term. Conventional crude oil production has declined in recent years but last year is the first year oil sands production surpassed conventional oil production. Natural gas production has also remained strong.

Oil sands production is more labour intensive than traditional oil production and the resulting demands on the workforce have been staggering in northern Alberta. The oil sands projects will require investments in facilities to refine more oil and pipelines to get product to market. Demands for construction workers in the next three to five years will be overwhelming. Shortages of engineers, geoscientists, project managers, tradespeople in general and heavy-duty mechanics in particular are also jeopardizing many projects according to the 2004 Careers Update.

Coal mining has also made a bit of a resurgence in the economy with the reopening of a mine in Grande Cache.

7 out of 8 stated they felt the sector was growing
0 out of 8 stated they felt the sector was stable
0 out of 8 stated they felt the sector was declining
1 out of 8 not respond to this question

Fields of study that are in high demand:

While respondents mentioned shortages in a number of areas in the long answer questions, they failed to list any particular field of study in high demand, in the second part of the survey.

Fields of study that one or more respondents find hard to recruit:

Diploma	Accounting
Degree	Chemical Engineering
Diploma	Chemical Engineering Technology
Degree	Civil Engineering
Degree	Commerce (Accounting) CA
Diploma	Construction Engineering
Certificate	Diesel Mechanic
Degree	Electrical/Electronic Engineering
Apprentice	Electrician
Journeyman	Electrician
Degree	Engineering

Degree	Engineering Petroleum
Diploma	Engineering Technology
Degree	Environmental Engineering
Diploma	Environmental Technology
Degree	Environmental/Resource Engineering
Certificate	Heavy Equipment Operator
Diploma	Heavy Equipment Technician
Apprentice	Heavy Equipment Technician
Journeyman	Heavy Equipment Technician
Diploma	Human Resources Management
Diploma	Industrial Heavy Equipment Technology
Degree	Industrial Management & Relations
Apprentice	Instrument Mechanic
Journeyman	Instrument Mechanic
Certificate	Instrumentation Technology
Diploma	Instrumentation Technology
Certificate	Machinist
Degree	Management
Degree	Mechanical Engineering
Diploma	Mechanical Engineering Technology
Certificate	Millwright
Apprentice	Millwright
Journeyman	Millwright
Degree	Mining Engineering
Certificate	Partsman
Diploma	Petroleum Engineering Technologies
Diploma	Power Engineering
Diploma	Purchasing/Materials Management
Degree	Survey Engineering
Diploma	Surveying & Photogrammetric Technology
Certificate	Welding
Apprentice	Welding
Journeyman	Welding

Employment Opportunities

Growth:

The demand for oil on the world market is high and expected to increase in the long-term. Uncertainty in the Middle East and sporadic supplies in Russia have kept the demand high and Alberta is exploiting that opportunity. Declines in conventional oil production have also put upward pressure on the price of oil creating opportunities for growth in northern Alberta. Companies in the sector are scrambling to keep up with demand.

In addition, the community and the workforce are struggling to keep up growth in the Fort McMurray Oil Sands as they continue to construct new oil sands facilities. Respondents reported Human Resource departments are struggling to keep up with shortages of

engineers, tradesmen, professionals and labourers. In addition, construction workers to build industrial and commercial facilities as well as residential properties are in very short supply.

Changes in employment opportunities:

All the respondents in this sector stated that they would be struggling to fill positions in the next three to five years. One respondent speculated that in the next few years inexperienced graduates would be working in positions they would never fill five years ago. Two respondents noted that there would be a shortage of all engineers, especially steam engineers.

In addition, respondents expected a shortage of experienced tradespeople across the whole sector. One respondent specifically mentioned a shortfall of heavy-duty mechanics and welders.

Current hiring and recruitment practices:

The activity in this industry has made hiring and recruitment an ongoing battle. One respondent mentioned traditional methods such as ads in papers are successful but insufficient to fill all positions. Two respondents reported using web site advertising but one of those respondents felt this was less successful than other forms of advertising. Headhunters and industry networking is another successful strategy. One respondent reported that the companies go on hiring tours and advertise internationally to fill positions.

Retaining these employees in this competitive marketplace is difficult. One respondent mentioned a reduced probationary period as one strategy.

Companies are also participating in marketing campaigns and initiatives designed to encourage new people into the industry. Respondents also reported companies are pursuing partnerships with schools and colleges to promote the field to young people.

How hiring will practices change:

While most companies are struggling to hire and keep employees some respondents felt they were doing all they could. Most admitted though the effort was not keeping pace with the demand for employees. Others felt they needed to pursue marketing campaigns targeted to young people. One respondent reported his company intended to pursue more promotion in high schools and colleges. Another respondent intended to pursue student co-operative programs.

Other respondents felt that marketing to other provinces and countries could be effective. One respondent expected Internet recruitment to increase in the future. He expected to focus on website advertising, email resumes, and distance interviews.

The increase in safety requirements for the industry is another challenge for employers. One respondent felt companies would require employees to have all their safety tickets before they commenced.

RETAIL AND WHOLESALE TRADE

General Trends in the Sector

Growth of the Mining Oil and Gas Sector and regional populations will prompt growth in the Retail and Wholesale Sector. However, this will pose a tremendous challenge. To cope with increasing demand for products they must be able to expand and that means recruiting and retaining employees who are often lured to more lucrative jobs in other sectors of this competitive economy.

However, this sector is expressing more optimism than it did in the previous Professional Workforce Scan. One respondent noted some types of retail stores are closing while specialty stores are managing to compete with the chain stores that are springing up in larger centres.

7 out of 10 stated they felt the sector was growing
2 out of 10 stated they felt the sector was stable
1 out of 10 stated they felt the sector was declining

Fields of study that are in high demand:

Diploma	Computer Networking Specialist
Certificate	Computer Service Technicians
Diploma	Customer & Public Relations
Diploma	Food Services & Preparation
Diploma	Marketing Management
Certificate	Native Management
Degree	Native Management
Certificate	Partsman
Diploma	Tourism and Hospitality

Fields of study that are also in high demand in other sectors:

Certificate	Computer Service Technicians
Diploma	Food Services & Preparation
Degree	Native Management
Diploma	Tourism and Hospitality

Fields of study that one or more respondents find hard to recruit:

Diploma	Accounting
Diploma	Administration Technology
Certificate	Business Administration
Degree	Commerce (Accounting) CA
Degree	Commerce (Finance)
Degree	Commerce (Management & Organization)

Diploma	Computer Networking Specialist
Diploma	Computer Operations Management
Certificate	Computer Operator
Diploma	Computer Programming & Software
Certificate	Computer Science Technology
Certificate	Computer Service Technicians
Diploma	Computer Service Technicians
Diploma	Computer Systems Analyst
Degree	Computer Systems Analyst
Diploma	Customer & Public Relations
Certificate	Digital & Interactive Media Design
Degree	Economics
Masters	Economics
Diploma	Financial Management (General)
Degree	Financial Management (General)
Diploma	Food Services & Preparation
Diploma	Global Tourism & Marketing
Diploma	Hotel & Food Administration
Certificate	Information Technology
Diploma	Information Technology & Systems Mgt
Diploma	Interactive Digital Design
Degree	Management
Diploma	Marketing & Sales
Degree	Marketing & Sales
Diploma	Marketing Management
Certificate	Office Administration
Certificate	Partsman
Diploma	Pharmacy Technology
Diploma	Public Administration
Degree	Public Administration
Degree	Recreation Administration
Certificate	Refrigeration and Air Conditioning
Diploma	Retailing & Sales
Degree	Secondary Food Processing (Research)

Employment Opportunities

Growth:

Respondents expect the unprecedented expansion in the economy fueled by oil and gas exploration and associated growth in other sectors will result in corresponding demand in the Retail and Wholesale Sector. Most respondents reported that population growth in some northern communities has meant increased demand for products. Unfortunately, it has also meant that competition for workers has increased, resulting in employee shortages for lower paying retail positions. However, employers agree that with population growth and increased wealth, their sector does benefit even if there are staffing challenges.

Stable:

Two respondents felt employment opportunities the sector was stable. One respondent said that while there is demand in the current economy for more products unfortunately the infrastructure is not in place to open new stores. One respondent reported the availability of commercial real estate properties in his community limited growth in the retail sector.

Another respondent felt that competition with large chain stores is challenging smaller stores in the retail sector.

Declining:

One respondent reported that the sector was declining but did not give any reasons.

Changes in employment opportunities:

As populations continue to rise in many northern communities, the retail sector expects to be able to offer more positions. Most of these positions will be for front line staff rather than professionals. Competition with other sectors for experienced labour will cause continued shortages in the retail sector.

Current hiring and retention practices:

Current hiring practices rely heavily on traditional media ads and local advertising. Retail and Wholesale respondents rely to a small degree on the Internet advertising. The only exception was a respondent from a community that enjoys some population growth due to its proximity to Fort McMurray. He reported employing recruiters, Internet advertising, as well as moving allowances and signing bonuses. No other respondents mentioned this aggressive recruitment.

How hiring practices will change:

Most agreed that recruitment and retention of employees needed to be improved but few knew what they would recommend. Currently the wage structure in the Retail and Wholesale Sector makes it difficult to compete with other sectors. Most respondents complained of losing employees to other sectors with better wages. However, two respondents did feel that increased attention to better wages and benefits could help the sector. Two people felt that recruitment and retention of employees would improve in the sector with an increase in the minimum wage. One respondent felt employers needed to increase marketing in the schools about careers in the Retail and Wholesale Sector.

SOCIAL SERVICES

General Trends in the Sector

Community based intervention and prevention programs are growing trends in the social services sector. This has increased the demand for services and complicated the delivery of

services as people are entering the system with less serious problems than they have in the past. In addition, the reliance on community partnerships to deliver services has increased the demand for administrative and community development professionals. Unfortunately, while there have been increased demands on staff, the sector has not enjoyed increased funding.

6 out of 9 stated they felt the sector was growing
3 out of 9 stated they felt the sector was stable
0 out of 9 stated they felt the sector was declining

Fields of study that are in high demand:

Degree	Addictions Counseling
Masters	Clinical Psychology
Degree	Counseling Services
Certificate	Digital & Interactive Media Design
Diploma	Digital & Interactive Media Design
Certificate	Early Childhood Services
Diploma	Early Childhood Services
Degree	Family Support Worker
Masters	Family Therapist
Diploma	Psychiatric Nursing
Degree	Psychiatric Nursing
Degree	Registered Psychiatric Nurse (RPN)
Diploma	Rehabilitation Practitioner
Diploma	Youth Care Counseling

Fields of study that are also in high demand in other sectors:

Certificate	Digital & Interactive Media Design
Diploma	Digital & Interactive Media Design
Diploma	Psychiatric Nursing
Diploma	Rehabilitation Practitioner

Fields of study that one or more respondents find hard to recruit:

Degree	Addictions Counseling
Diploma	Administration Technology
Masters	Clinical Psychology
Degree	Commerce (Management & Organization)
Degree	Community Development
Certificate	Computer Science Technology
Degree	Counseling Services
Diploma	Criminal Justice
Degree	Criminology
Certificate	Early Childhood Services

Diploma	Early Childhood Services
Degree	Family Support Worker
Masters	Family Therapist
Certificate	Human Services
Diploma	Human Services
Certificate	Information Technology
Diploma	Information Technology & Systems Mgt
Diploma	Mental Health Worker
Degree	Native Studies
Diploma	Psychiatric Nursing
Degree	Psychiatric Nursing
Degree	Psychology
Degree	Registered Psychiatric Nurse (RPN)
Diploma	Rehabilitation Practitioner
Certificate	Residential Aide
Diploma	Social Work/Welfare (Aboriginal Specialization)
Degree	Social Work/Welfare (Aboriginal Specialization)
Diploma	Social Work/Welfare (General)
Degree	Social Work/Welfare (General)
Masters	Social Work/Welfare (General)
Degree	Sociology
Certificate	Teacher's Aid
Certificate	Vocational Guidance & Counseling
Degree	Vocational Guidance & Counseling
Masters	Vocational Guidance & Counseling
Diploma	Youth Care Counseling

Employment Opportunities

Growth:

Population growth, aging population, increased expectations of the public, and increased awareness of interventions is creating demand for services in the Social Services Sector. People with disabilities are living longer and healthier lives and demanding more services reported one respondent. Another respondent noted that there is increased confidence in the services provided in Aboriginal communities resulting in an increased demand for services.

Stable:

Three respondents felt that the employment opportunities in the sector were stable. While there is increased demand for services, there has been no increased funding. Emphasis on community partnerships has not yet filled the gap between available and needed services. In addition, Mental Health and Student Health Initiatives are not keeping up with demand for their services.

Changes in employment opportunities:

The sector has had increased demand for services, in spite of the emphasis the province has placed on community partnerships. Community based intervention and prevention programs

to cope with social problems experienced in the north are developing but not as fast as they are required, reported one respondent. Unfortunately funding has not kept pace with demands for services. Employers have put programs on hold because of a lack of qualified candidates reported one respondent.

One respondent noted that as social work is now a recognized profession there would be increased demand for candidates with social work degrees.

Current hiring and recruitment practices:

Currently the sector is employing traditional recruitment practices in local papers. One respondent reported that this is also true in Aboriginal communities. Other communities, served by provincial agencies, advertise in industry magazines and provincial job postings. Others are setting a wider net, advertising in national industry magazines and on the Internet.

How hiring practices will change:

Increased competition for candidates has forced respondents to employ more techniques to advertise than they have in the past. However, they did not feel they would be employing new hiring practices, only that they would be sharing techniques currently used in other parts of the sector. One respondent felt that their recruitment campaigns would move from local and provincial in scope to national. Others felt they might advertise on the Internet when they did not before.

TRANSPORTATION & UTILITIES

General Trends in the Sector

The Transportation and Utilities Sector is growing largely because of increased demand for infrastructure. Rapid growth in the oil industry and regional population growth have made this sector crucial to the ongoing health of the northern Alberta economy. According to the 2004 Alberta Careers Update, trucking remains the transportation of choice in Alberta. Most respondents involved with the trucking industry had an optimistic view of the future employment in the sector. Rail transportation are used less for moving goods though there is a renewed focus on rail in northern Alberta.

While there is growth in some regional airlines, the instability in the airline industry has also affected the sector in the region. One respondent reported that increased costs have reduced profit margins and destabilized the industry.

7 out of 9 stated they felt the sector was growing
2 out of 9 stated they felt the sector was stable
0 out of 9 stated they felt the sector was declining

Fields of study that are in high demand:

Diploma	Aircraft Maintenance

Diploma	Auto Mechanic
Diploma	Civil Engineering Technology
Apprentice	Communication Electrician
Journeyman	Communication Electrician
Diploma	Communication Technologist
Certificate	Computer Service Technicians
Diploma	Computer Service Technicians
Diploma	Computer Systems Analyst
Degree	Computer Systems Analyst
Diploma	Construction Engineering
Certificate	Diesel Mechanic
Diploma	Electrical Technology
Degree	Electrical/Electronic Engineering
Apprentice	Electrician
Journeyman	Electrician
Degree	Forestry
Degree	Geological Engineering
Diploma	Geological & Geophysical Technologist
Degree	Geophysical Engineering
Diploma	Heavy Equipment Technician
Apprentice	Heavy Equipment Technician
Journeyman	Heavy Equipment Technician
Certificate	Instrumentation Technology
Diploma	Instrumentation Technology
Degree	Mechanical Engineering
Diploma	Pilot
Apprentice	Power Lineman
Journeyman	Power Lineman
Journeyman	Power System Electrician
Journeyman	Welding

Fields of study that are also in high demand in other sectors:

Certificate	Computer Service Technicians
Diploma	Construction Engineering
Certificate	Diesel Mechanic
Apprentice	Electrician
Journeyman	Electrician
Diploma	Heavy Equipment Technician
Apprentice	Heavy Equipment Technician
Journeyman	Heavy Equipment Technician
Certificate	Instrumentation Technology
Diploma	Instrumentation Technology
Degree	Mechanical Engineering
Journeyman	Welding

Fields of study that one or more respondents find hard to recruit:

Degree	Civil Engineering
Journeyman	Electrician
Degree	Materials Engineering
Diploma	Materials Engineering Technology

Employment Opportunities

Growth:

Some industries in the Transportation and Utilities Sector are doing exceptionally well. Population growth and oil and gas development have meant that both the trucking industry and the utilities industries have seen significant growth in demand for their services. Those respondents participating in those industries were very positive about the future growth of employment opportunities in the sector.

In spite of a decreased demand for rail transportation in the province as a whole, one respondent involved in the rail industry was very positive about that industry in northern Alberta. He stated, "The rail transportation business is growing rapidly and with it the need for train engineers, conductors and mechanical practitioners. {These jobs} require a lengthy training period."

This sector like most others in the economy is watching its current workforce approach the age of retirement. One respondent mentioned that retirements would allow for more opportunities for graduates in the sector.

Stable:

Two respondents were less optimistic about the sector's employment opportunities. One respondent, active in the airline industry, felt that industry's instability was reducing the employment opportunities. He said, "Stability in the aviation industry is in question due to rising costs and narrow profit margins.

Changes in employment opportunities:

The demand for specific skills is developing in this sector. The trucking industry is now short of truckers and one can expect this trend to accelerate in the next three to five years according to one respondent. Two other respondents pointed out that retirements in the rail industry would result in shortages of train engineers and conductors. The utility industry is going to require more tradesmen, technologists and engineers.

Current hiring and recruitment practices:

As in other sectors, there is a wide range of recruitment and hiring practices in the sector. Some employers are still relying on print ads and word of mouth. Other employers are more proactive. One employer mentioned going to colleges and driving schools for contacts.

Another respondent reported ads in industry magazines. Still another used web page advertising to recruit candidates.

The utilities industry was very specific about their recruitment process. "Positions are filled through competitive process under conditions of the public service act."

How hiring practices will change:

Most respondents did not expect dramatic changes in their hiring practices in the future. A few intend to be more proactive. The railway industry has formed a partnership with SAIT to train locomotion engineers, conductors, and maintenance employees. Another respondent is concentrating on employee retention, using flexible work hours and work arrangements to keep employees satisfied.

CONCLUSIONS

Dramatic growth in the Oil and Gas Sector is fuelling growth across many sectors of the Alberta economy. Medical and Health, Education, Hospitality, Recreation, and Tourism, Finance and Insurance, and especially Construction, Manufacturing and Trades have seen spin off benefits from the unprecedented growth in oil and gas. On the down side, all sectors have had difficulty filling their positions because of the lucrative and fertile labour market in oil and gas. Employers have had to become dramatically more competitive when looking for skilled workers. This will only benefit new graduates.

The only possible exception to this trend is the Logging, Forestry, and Wood Products Sector and the Agriculture and Food Processing Sector that both experienced little growth in employment opportunities in the past few years. In both cases, trade disputes with the United States have been a factor in this stagnation. For the Logging, Forestry and Wood Products Sector this explanation is far too simple, as the stagnation has also resulted from industry mechanization and a shortage of new wood fibre allocations. For the Agriculture and Food Processing sector, employment opportunities remain in the areas of innovation and biotechnology. However, until the trade problems resulting from the BSE crisis are resolved we can expect employment opportunities to be less than they could be.

Regional population increases has resulted in growth in most economic sectors. Fort McMurray appears to be an entity unto itself. Extreme population growth is now causing difficulties in most sectors. It is difficult to recruit and retain people to live in the area, as housing is so expensive it is challenging to survive financially in the community. This extreme housing shortage is now spilling over into communities to the south where people are buying homes, then commuting north to work during the week. Employers in some sectors are finding it difficult to recruit, and have begun offering bonuses to offset the price of housing. Other sectors are relying more heavily on consulting so their staff is not so dependent on the housing market.

In other sectors, the employment opportunities are dependent on whether the population is growing in their particular regions. The northeast is experiencing population growth in some communities with growth in their conventional crude oil production or natural gas production.

In other communities, populations are stagnant or declining and respondents were conservative in their outlook on employment opportunities.

Some sectors of the economy have employment opportunities even without population growth. The Health and Medical Sector has traditionally needed the full range of health care professionals. Now in addition to chronic shortages in these professions they are looking for specialists in information technology, paramedics, and distance diagnostics.

A shortage of teachers is also developing in northern Alberta. Provincial standards require smaller class sizes in Kindergartens and this has resulted in an increased demand for teachers with ECS backgrounds. Teachers with math and science backgrounds continue to be in short supply. Severe shortages are developing in many growing communities.

Respondents in all the sectors are concerned about how they will fill vacancies as baby boomers retire. This will of course create opportunities for new graduates. However, employers were concerned that the demand for employees would outstrip the supply. Many employers mentioned needing to recruit internationally to fill positions. Many employers were also concerned about a lack of experience in the workforce as new graduates will be promoted in organizations before they have the skills to cope with supervisory and management positions. These employers mentioned needing to do a lot of transition planning and employee mentoring to mitigate some of these effects.

A critical shortage of tradespeople is developing in the northern economy in part because of the aging workforce. Employers involved in the resource sectors, construction, manufacturing, transportation and utilities all report that shortages are expected to grow critical in the coming years. Employers are looking nationally and internationally to find experienced tradespeople. Young people, women, and Aboriginal groups are being targeted for recruitment and training. As the demand for tradespeople grows, one can expect higher wages and increased interest in the trades.

Baby boomers are also having a significant impact on the demand for services. This is especially significant in the Financial and Insurance Sector as the demand for retirement planning shifts to estate and wealth management. Changes in health service delivery to an aging population affects what types of professionals will be required in the Medical and Health Sector.

One of the challenges for employers in all sectors appears to be recruitment and retention of skilled workers. Employers forced to compete with other employers for skilled workers are moving past the frustration of recent years, and attempting to employ strategies to hire and keep their skilled workers. Employers use retainment bonuses in a number of sectors. They offer increased wages in most sectors including sectors where wages are traditionally low. Many employers offer flexible work hours, and some are exploring on-site childcare.

Hiring practices appear to be a bit more competitive than they have been in the past. Most sectors mentioned using print media, but it seemed employers were more likely to be advertising in national papers or professional magazines rather than local papers than they had reported in the past. In addition, more employers mentioned using the Internet or web page advertising. Finally, more employers mentioned visiting colleges and schools to recruit or use professional contacts to fill positions. Graduates can look forward to having more options when looking for their first positions.

More companies are relying on networking in their sector to find qualified people. Some respondents reported recruiting qualified people directly from their competitors. Most respondents reported advertising by "word of mouth." It would appear that nurturing contacts in a sector will be even more useful to securing good positions than it has been in the past.

With the increasing competition in the economy, employers are requiring employees who demonstrate creativity and entrepreneurial skills. Most sectors are experiencing growing pains, as market demands require adaptation and competitive attitudes to respond. In some sectors, innovation and value added processing were significant areas of growth.

In addition, graduates who have entrepreneurial skills and the confidence to strike out on their own will be in demand in today's marketplace. Contracting out jobs to consultants is becoming more common due to a number of factors. The cost of benefits is certainly a factor. However, there is also an increasing demand for more flexibility in the workforce.

From the job seekers' perspective, the job market in the northern economy looks rosy. Graduates have more opportunities for good jobs in the strong northern economy than they have had in many years. Not only will retirements create vacancies in existing industries, innovations and growth in expanding sectors will also result in many jobs in new fields. Their skills will be required in every economic sector in the northern economy. The biggest challenge for graduates will not be finding work, but finding a way gain experience and confidence to succeed at the challenges they will face in the economy of the future.